

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the presence of allowable subject matter in claims 3, 4 and 7. Accordingly, these claims have been amended as not to depend from a claim. New claims 8 and 9 are supported by original claims 5 and 6, respectively, but depend from allowable claim 3. No new matter has been entered.

The abstract stands objected to as being of improper form. In response, the abstract has been amended.

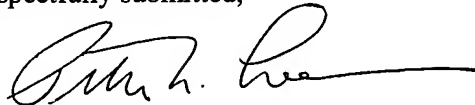
Claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Yamashita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,263,668). The Office Action asserts this reference expressly teaches each feature of the rejected claims. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

According to the present claims, the engine is operated in a lean operating range (i.e., with a lean mixture). During this time, nitrogen oxides are stored in a nitrogen oxide catalyst, and the nitrogen oxide level in the tail pipe emissions is measured. When the tail pipe nitrogen oxide level reaches a predetermined threshold, the operation of engine is switched to a rich operating range (i.e., with a rich mixture). The system of Yamashita et al. does not operate in the same manner. While the system of the reference includes an exhaust sensor, this sensor 16 is an air-fuel sensor (or A/F sensor). As is known in the art, an air-fuel sensor measures an air:fuel ratio. Thus, the A/F sensor 16 of Yamashita et al. does not measure nitrogen oxide levels in tail pipe emissions.

As neither this reference, nor any cited reference, teaches or suggests to modify the system of Yamashita et al. to achieve the presently claimed invention, Applicant respectfully submits the rejected claims are allowable over this reference.

A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested. If any fee is necessary to make this paper, or any paper filed herewith, timely and/or complete, such fee may be deducted from Deposit Account No. 19-4375.

Respectfully submitted,



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